

**Revised**

**2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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*U.S. Department of Education*

**Cover Sheet**

Type of School: X Elementary \_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_ High \_\_\_ K-12  
Name of Principal Mr. Darryl Tunseth  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Phoenix Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 351 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. South  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Grand Forks North Dakota 58201 - 4635  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)  
County Grand Forks School CodeNumber\* \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (701) 746 - 2240 Fax (701) - 746 - 2244

Website/URL http://www.gfschools.org/phoenix E-mail Darryl.Tunseth@gfschools.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Mark Sanford  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Grand Forks Public Schools Tel. (701) 746 - 2205

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Dr. Eric Lunn  
I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

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## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2004 – 2005 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: 11 Elementary schools  
4 Middle schools  
0 Junior high schools  
2 High schools  
1 Other  
18 TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$6,325.62  
Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$6,383.63

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☐ Suburban  
☒ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural

4. 3 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

           If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK				7			
K	23	19	42	8			
1	21	18	39	9			
2	22	16	38	10			
3	13	21	34	11			
4	21	15	36	12			
5	18	19	28	Other			
6							
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							217

[Throughout the document, round numbers to avoid decimals.]

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- |                   |                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>80</u>         | % White                          |
| <u>5</u>          | % Black or African American      |
| <u>7</u>          | % Hispanic or Latino             |
| <u>0</u>          | % Asian/Pacific Islander         |
| <u>8</u>          | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| <b>100% Total</b> |                                  |

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 35 %

(This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.)

<b>(1)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	41
<b>(2)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	34
<b>(3)</b>	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	75
<b>(4)</b>	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	217
<b>(5)</b>	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	35
<b>(6)</b>	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	35

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 1 %  
3 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 1  
Specify languages: Albanian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 42%

Total number students who qualify: 92

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 22%  
48 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>3</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

**Number of Staff**

	<u><b>Full-time</b></u>	<u><b>Part-Time</b></u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>13</u>	<u>          </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>15</u>	<u>          </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>9</u>	<u>          </u>
Support staff	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>43</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio: 17 to 1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Daily student attendance	96%	94%	96%	96%	%

## **Part III: Summary**

### **School snapshot**

In the spring of 1997 Grand Forks went through a devastating flood that seriously threatened the continued existence of the community. Several schools, homes, businesses, and infrastructure were destroyed and lost forever. Two of the schools that were destroyed were Belmont Elementary and Lincoln Elementary. These two schools served eastern sections of the city that faced the largest challenge of recovery after the flood. After several community meetings between the city council, school board, Federal Emergency and Management Agency (FEMA) and the Army Core of Engineers a decision was made to build a new school that would serve the needs of the community that was once served by Belmont and Lincoln. Plans were quickly formulated and construction began in the summer of 1997, and Phoenix Elementary would be ready for operation in the fall of 1998. Another difficult decision needed to be made. Where would students be educated while they waited for their new school to be ready? School district administration with the assistance of (FEMA) made the decision to educate students in relocateable structures while construction was underway.

During December of 1997 fire struck the relocateable structures and they were completely destroyed. Once again the teaching staff and neighborhood was devastated by another tragedy. During the Christmas holiday of 1997 – 98 arrangements were made to use a local church facility to become the school for students in the neighborhood. Many donations of time and materials came in from across the country and by Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> the school was open again. In August of 1998 the new school opened its doors for students for the first time. The location of Phoenix is 351 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. South the same location where Belmont Elementary formally stood. Phoenix was the name chosen by staff and students. A Phoenix is a legendary bird held to burn itself to death and rise fresh from the ashes. The building was designed with a two story format, with an atmosphere that is comfortable for staff and students while at the same time reflecting a school of the future.

Phoenix, like all elementary schools, has some interesting demographic information. It is important to understand the information when building programs to fit the students' needs. Phoenix is located in an old part of the city with a broad spectrum of the socioeconomic scale. Forty-two percent of the student body meet criteria for free and reduced lunches. Forty-six percent of the free or reduced students are girls and fifty-four percent are boys. Fifty-six percent of the free or reduced population are White, twenty-seven percent are Native American, eleven percent are Hispanic or Latino, and six percent are Black or African American. Thirty-five percent of our free or reduced population receive special education service and six percent of the free or reduced population are on 504 plans. Forty percent of our student population is living in single parent homes with sixty percent having both parents in the home. Fifty-five percent of our students live in low-rent housing, with forty-five percent living in homes owned by the parents. Six percent of our students have a parent who is currently incarcerated. These factors all have an impact on student learning and present the staff with additional challenges when planning for instruction.

Phoenix has more than met expectations and has become a centerpiece for the neighborhood. The school currently houses Headstart through grade five with an enrollment of 217 students and 50 staff members. The instructional program has evolved to include basic skill development in all curricular areas with an added emphasis on building self-esteem and independent learning skills. The mission of Phoenix Elementary School is to provide a safe, child-centered learning environment where all students develop the knowledge, skills, self-respect and responsibility needed to meet the challenges of our diverse and changing world.

## **Part IV**

### **School Assessment Results**

Each year fourth grade students at our school participate in state mandated standardized tests.

The students are assessed in two primary areas by the state department of education.

Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. The reading assessment measures essential reading skills as defined within state standards at a set grade level. The assessment is a collection of items carefully selected by the assessment publisher (CTB McGraw – Hill) and North Dakota teachers. Test items are weighted and balanced to offer an accurate assessment of what students know and can do. The test offers a meaningful measurement of classroom instruction and student performance. Reading is the primary focus of this assessment; however, an additional, limited section on language arts content, such as grammar and writing, is also included to partially measure a student's knowledge and skills. The math assessment measures essential mathematics and skills as defined within state standards at a set grade level. The assessment is a collection of items carefully selected by the assessment publisher (CTB McGraw-Hill) and North Dakota teachers. Test items are weighted and balanced to offer an accurate assessment of what students know and can do. The test offers a meaningful measurement of classroom instruction and student performance. At the conclusion of the testing process parents and teachers are provided with a summary report that specifically identifies reading and math proficiency ratings at four performance levels: advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and novice.

Our last summary reports showed in Reading that we had 8 of 28 students or 32% at the advanced level, 17 of 28 or 68% at the proficient level, 0 of 28 or 0% at the partially proficient level, and 0 of 28 or 0% at the novice level. In the area of Mathematics the report showed 10 of 28 or 40% at the advance level, 9 of 28 or 36% at the proficient level, 6 of 28 or 24% at partially proficient, and 0 of 28 or 0% at the novice level. Our test results in Reading and Math are very positive; the areas we would like all children to achieve at are in the advance and proficient categories. Students whose scores fall in the partially proficient and novice range need further development in those curriculum areas.

In order for the school to receive information regarding subgroups there must be at least 10 students in a group before summary report information is presented, none of our subgroups met that criterion. We do analyze each students tests results on an individual basis to get an informed understanding of each child's strengths and weaknesses in Reading and Math.

The North Dakota Department of Public instruction each year establishes proficient cut scores in Reading and Mathematics that are used to determine if a school is making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress).

Established cut scores in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics for 2004 were: Reading = 634, Math = 635, our fourth grade students excelled with 66% performing at proficient or above in Reading and 46% in Mathematics performing at proficient or above. We are very pleased with the results and look forward to continued progress. Information on the state assessment system can be found at: [www.dpi.state.nd.us/standard/content.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/standard/content.shtm)

### **School use of assessment data**

The CTBS (Cognitive Test of Basic Skills) was given to students in grades one through five in the spring of 2001, 2002, and 2003, and during the spring and fall of 2004. An analysis was completed to measure student progress against state and local achievement standards and benchmarks. Once student weaknesses are identified, we reexamine our NCA (North Central Association) school improvement target areas. New target areas may be developed to address the concerns found in the test results. Action plans are then written to make student and school performance improvements. Action plans may include items such as: the implementation of a new curriculum, scientifically based teaching strategies implementation, incorporation of a common instructional language, implementation of professional learning communities for staff development, assessment materials needed to measure achievement, parent involvement opportunities, class scheduling considerations, and timelines for program improvement. Our test data and action plans are then shared with an NCA visitation team chair who gives us feedback and direction on the plans developed. Action plans are then put into practice and are continuously evolving throughout the entire process.

Test data and action plans are submitted to the NCA central office for review and acceptance. An NCA visitation team of professionals representing each selected target area is established and a visitation

date is set. The visitation team takes an outside look at the implementation of action plans and provides school target area teams with feedback that will enhance the ongoing improvement process.

### **School communications**

Student achievements are reported to our school community in a variety of communication modes. A monthly newsletter is published and distributed to each home; the newsletter states the schools mission statement and gives community members information on school improvement target areas and why and how they were identified for improvement. Progress in meeting established goals in each target area is also reflected based on student performance and attendance rates. We also have a web page accessible to the public that reflects schools performance and progress. We hold formal parent teacher conferences two times a year to share with parent's individual student strengths and areas for continued development. Report cards are sent home three times a year which also reflect the child's progress in each trimester of school. Copies of student performance on standardized tests are also mailed home as soon as the results are available. Our school counselor and test coordinator are available to answer questions concerning the standardized test results. Our Adequate Yearly Progress Report is also mailed to each home showing the performance rates of our building in the areas of Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. Test information and results are also shared at monthly PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) meetings. Monthly school wide assemblies are held to share target area progress results with students and to encourage them to continue the good work.

### **Sharing information**

Our staff is very knowledgeable and willing to share their expertise with others. The teachers are very comfortable in hosting visitors who would like to observe their teaching practices. They enjoy the opportunity to reflect with others on teaching styles and strategies to implement into effective instruction. Several staff members are asked to serve on district committees to share their expertise and insights with other educators. Some staff members have also served on NCA visitation teams because of their knowledge and successes in the classroom. Our special education team has shared at the state and local level their successes with alternate assessments and test accommodations for students with special needs. We have a wonderful partnership with the University of North Dakota's Education Department. Our teachers are willing to mentor student teachers and to share their knowledge and successes with them.

Staff members are also willing to present and instruct University education classes. A resident teacher program has also been implemented that allows an education masters level student at the university to have a full time teaching position at Phoenix Elementary as they pursue their masters in education degree. The resident has a full time mentor teacher who is available to assist them with classroom instruction as well as their University coarse work. The mentor teacher has several years of experience in teaching and also has a masters of education degree. The resident teacher program allows us to share our successes with individual resident teachers, but also with the entire education department at the University. We also share our ideas and strategies at district level meetings with all of the public schools in the city. As we plan for the future we hope to continue our relationship with the University and we hope to share our ideas with other schools across the state.

## **Part V**

### **School Curriculum**

In each of our curriculum frameworks, both the state and national standards were used as model templates as we constructed our local documents. The goal for current and upcoming curriculum text selection is that it aligns with the schools mission and that it is district, state and nationally aligned. Frameworks drives the curriculum selection.

Reading: Our district is known for its strong emphasis in reading instruction. Scott Foresman is our core reading program focusing on the five components of reading as outlined by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. District wide we are engaged in guided reading methods which insure meeting the needs of our students at their instructional



level. Our libraries are rich with both fiction and non-fiction selections. Our classroom libraries are strong with daily, authentic tasks that complete the entire literacy circle. (reading, writing, speaking, spelling) At the core of reading intervention is an excellent Reading Recovery program. Specialists have access to Reading A-Z and numerous other interventions which are tailored to the needs of the individual student.

**Scholastic Spelling Writing:** The district has 6 core beliefs about spelling: 1) Phonemic awareness is a key predictor of spelling success. 2) Good spellers aren't born, they're taught. 3) Children pass through identifiable stages in learning to spell. 4) Children encounter common confusions in learning to spell that call for immediate intervention strategies. 5) Good spellers are better readers and writers. 6) Children retain spelling knowledge best when they use new words in reading and writing. The spelling activities chosen focus on each of these areas. Teachers follow the core spelling program and enhance their spelling instruction through a series of activities, games, and intervention strategies that enable students to become better spellers. The Zaner Blozer curriculum is used for handwriting development. Great Source materials, Write One, Write Away, Write on Track, and Writers Express are used to sharpen writing skills. District wide we are focusing on the Six Traits of writing model.

**Math:** Everyday Math is an excellent series which focuses on the NCTM requirement of Numeration, Operations and Computation, Patterns, Functions, and Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Data and Chance. The strong scope and sequence has proven to provide an appropriate balance between skill development and hands on application. Teachers support the core program with simulations, games, and projects which reinforce the real world math application. Literacy and Numeracy have been the district's foremost goals due to AYP requirements. Ongoing staff development is offered to optimize the teacher's abilities to teach the content with proficiency. Numerous manipulatives accompany the daily lessons. Reteaching and acceleration is done through a number of delivery systems including one-on-one, small and large flexible groupings. Differentiated instruction is an ongoing instructional model; especially in reading and math.

**Social Studies:** The frameworks used to choose the core text for social studies was one that was strong in history, economics, science and technology, geography, culture, citizenship, government, and national symbols. Scott Foresman is our core text in grades K – 4, however current events, internet searches, personal interviews, primary and secondary sources, videos, newspapers, magazines, and rich fiction, non-fiction, and historical fiction enhance the instruction. At the fifth grade level, History Alive was chosen for the interactive and relevant information it provided for our curriculum frameworks. Graphic organizers and a number of other intervention strategies are utilized to unpack the text.

**Science:** The core series is Scott Foresman and the instructional strands in K-5 include life science, physical science, earth science, and human body. Teachers support these themes through theme studies, fiction and non-fiction books, videos, hands on experiments, science projects, field trips, and current events, to name a few.

**Art:** Our art program consists of three components:

1. Artist in the Classroom program.
2. Artist in Residence program.
3. Instruction by the classroom teacher.

The Artist in the classroom program currently serves students for 12 weeks. Artists visit classrooms and provide instruction on the elements of art and the principles of design, using the discipline based art education model, art production, art history, aesthetics and art criticism.

The Artist in Residence program operates in a mobile art classroom and serves students for approximately 6 weeks. The program has a multicultural focus: fifth grade focus is on Ojibwa American Indians – beadwork, fourth grade focus is on Africa – paper mache' masks, third grade focus is on Vikings – weaving, second grade focus is on Mexico – clay cats and copper repousse, first grade focus is on Japan – printmaking, origami, signature chops, marbled paper, clay "tea" bowls, kindergarten focus is on gourd maracas. Students visit the mobile art classroom initially to be introduced to the relevant culture and then to work on their art projects. As they progress in years they are exposed to a variety of art and world cultures. Classroom teachers are given a variety of items, such as books, videos, items to observe

and discuss to extend learning into the classroom.

Instruction by classroom teachers fulfills the remainder of the school year. The school system has written and adopted a curriculum designed for classroom teacher use. This curriculum is currently being studied by our district art committee and may be revised to meet new frameworks. Students also benefit from opportunities provided by a community non-profit group known as Art Wise. Art Wise hosts an annual art show that features art from every elementary student. Art Wise also raises funds and provides over \$30,000 in support of the Artist in the Classroom program

### **Reading Curriculum**

A balanced literacy approach would best describe Phoenix Elementary's focus on reading. Although, we use the Scott Foresman Reading Basals (2000) as a guide to reading & language arts instruction our focus is much larger than any series could encompass. This is evidenced by our 600+ sets of leveled books (Fountas and Pinnell), extensive staff development on the five main areas of scientifically based reading research (phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension), 1.5 full time equivalent Reading Recovery teachers, and extensive use of running records as a guide to classroom reading instruction.

Guided Reading instruction by classroom teachers is the primary method of reading instruction. This approach makes it possible for teachers to use explicit teaching at the appropriate level for each student's reading progress. Although this approach enables most children at Phoenix to be reading at or above grade level the reality is that a percentage of the children our school serves come to us with a significant risk of reading problems.

We are able to use a team-based approach to students that are experiencing reading difficulties. This may include classroom-based paraprofessionals, special educators, social work and counselor services, and most directly the assessment and instruction by Reading Recovery teachers of the children most at risk in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Reading Recovery's (Marie Clay) philosophy and program uses direct, one on one teaching of reading and writing to make sure that the 1<sup>st</sup> grade children most at-risk are given early intervention and success (80% success rate) to this most important school skill.

While teaching reading is, at the very least, a very complex process, the amount of time, staff development, advanced degrees and expertise that exists at Phoenix Elementary means that the students attending school here reap the benefits of a staff that is capable of delivering the instruction needed to each student in a thoughtful and purposeful manner.

### **Math curriculum**

We have a strong instructional focus on mathematics instruction. Our instruction follows Everyday Mathematics that was developed through the University of Chicago School of Mathematics. Everyday mathematics begins with the premise that young children can, and must, learn more mathematics than has been expected from them in the past. Everyday mathematics emphasizes numeration, counting, reading and writing numbers, investigating place value of whole numbers, exploring fractions and money. Operations and Computation where students learn addition and subtraction facts, fact families, extended facts, beginning informal work with properties of numbers and problem solving.

Data and Chance where students learn collecting, organizing, and displaying data using tables, charts, and graphs. Geometry exploring two and three dimensional shapes. Measurement and Reference frames using tools to measure length, capacity in quarts and liters, weight, using clocks, calendars, timelines, thermometers, and ordinal numbers. Patterns, Functions, and Algebra students will have opportunities to explore attributes, patterns, sequences, relations, and functions. Everyday mathematics keeps families informed and involved, parents receive family letters to keep them informed of the mathematical content of what children are studying in each unit. Each family letter gives parents a vocabulary list, suggested do anytime activities to reinforce lessons learned in school. Parents are also provided with an answer guide to homework activities. We believe that by making Everyday Mathematics a part of everyday work and play, ideas gradually shape children's ways of thinking about mathematics and foster the development of mathematical intuition and understanding.

## **Instructional Methods**

A wide range of instructional methods are used daily to help students achieve to the highest degree at Phoenix Elementary. Cooperative grouping is incorporated into appropriate areas of the curriculum. This type of instruction helps students to draw from the strengths of one another and helps them learn how to work and contribute to a team. Learning Centers are also used by teachers to challenge students and to give them the opportunity to be self directed independent learners. Cross curriculum instruction is a strategy used by teachers consistently, it connects all areas of the curriculum and makes learning authentic. Technology is incorporated into all areas of the curriculum, students and teachers use many forms of technology to enhance lessons and bring the world into their classrooms. The media center staff incorporates Isafe training to the entire student body; it trains students about internet safety and proper use.

Our after school ENCORE program helps at risk students, it provides them with a safe place to be where they receive additional instruction time in Reading, Math and Science and assistance with homework. We have a building level support team (BLST) that is comprised of a group of teachers who provide instructional strategies and ideas to teachers that they can try with struggling students. Our Special Education teachers hold daily collaboration meetings with regular education teachers to give them support and strategies to implement into their teaching to meet the needs of students with special needs. Character counts assemblies are held once a month, the student council presents information to the students about appropriate behaviors and expectations. Our PTO ( Parent Teacher Organization) supports book fairs, family reading festivals and book celebrations, these events are held in the evenings so parents can attend. Open library nights are also scheduled so parents and students can come to school at night to check out books.

## **Professional Development**

Our school's professional development program is based on professional learning communities. We have access to a web site entitled "TeachFirst" which is produced and published by TeachFirst Inc. Seattle, Washington [www. Teachfirst.com](http://www.Teachfirst.com). It has been very instrumental in assisting teachers to be reflective about their teaching. Our monthly planning calendar has dedicated the first Tuesday of each month to Professional Learning Communities and TeachFirst. Each grade-level teaching team is asked to do four things:

1. Analyze data on student achievement from the previous year/month.
2. Identify strengths and weaknesses of student performance.
3. Reach an agreement on the reality of past student achievement.
4. Identify a goal to enhance student achievement in our NCA school-improvement plan: math and language arts.

Each grade level team then completes an action plan with a selected goal that is specific to the identified standard and benchmark. The objectives of each goal must be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and accomplished by a designated timeline. Teams establish grade level specific teaching strategies and assessments to measure growth on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. At the conclusion of a month the process starts over again with the same guiding questions.

Our coordinated and focused team time has created unity and a dedication to instructional strategies to improve student achievement. Instruction is focused on goals and objectives that are authentic. Teachers are now teaching to identified student needs, and assessment scores are showing positive gains.

**North Dakota State Assessment  
Grade 4 Reading  
Phoenix Elementary School**

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	March	March	March
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>			
% At or Above Partially Proficient	100	89	87
% At or Above Proficient	100	62	70
% At Advanced	32	20	17
Number of students tested	28	45	36
Percent of total students tested	90	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	10	0	0
<b>STATE SCORES</b>			
% At or Above Partially Proficient	95	92	92
% At or Above Proficient	80	74	74
% At Advanced	24	22	21

**North Dakota State Assessment  
Grade 4 Mathematics  
Phoenix Elementary School**

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Testing month	March	March	March
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>			
% At or Above Partially Proficient	100	78	89
% At or Above Proficient	76	60	50
% At Advanced	40	22	19
Number of students tested	28	45	36
Percent of total students tested	90	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	10	0	0
<b>STATE SCORES</b>			
% At or Above Partially Proficient	90	87	86
% At or Above Proficient	64	58	57
% At Advanced	24	20	19

**Criteria for North Dakota Alternate Assessment:**

1. The student's cognitive ability and adaptive behavior prevent completion of all or part of the general curriculum.
2. The student requires extensive, frequent and individual instruction in multiple settings in order to maintain or generalize skills necessary to function in school, home, community, vocational, and recreation / leisure settings.
3. The student's curriculum is so individualized that the state mandated assessment (the North Dakota State Assessment) would not reflect what the student is being taught.